



STORM COURIER



Winter 2003-2004

National Weather Service, Charleston SC

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Four New Spotter Training Classes Scheduled! - by Hal Austin



NWS Charleston has scheduled four new spotter training classes for early 2004: two basic classes and two advanced classes. Paul Yura and Steve Wilkinson, two of our forecasters, have developed all-new slide programs for this year with lots of great information and beautiful color graphics. Dates for the basic classes are Thursday February 19th, and Monday February 23rd. Dates for the advanced classes are Tuesday March 2nd, and Wednesday March 24th. **NOTE!** *You must have taken two basic spotter classes before you can take the advanced.* All four

classes will be held at 7 pm at the National Weather Service Forecast Office in North Charleston. You must pre-register to take a class by calling (843) 744-0303. Anyone on our staff will be happy to sign you up. The dates and times are posted on the NWS Charleston website at <http://wchs.csc.noaa.gov> right under "Top News of the Day." Space is limited so please call soon. Hope to see you there!

January-March 2004 Outlook - by Hal Austin

On December 18th, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center released its' final forecast for the remainder of the January to March 2004 winter season. Below average temperatures are forecast from eastern Texas into the Carolinas, including much of Florida. As for precipitation, there are equal



chances of below-, near- and above-normal amounts. “December 2003 shows us just how variable winter patterns can be,” said Edward O’Lenic, meteorologist at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center. “It is important for people to pay close attention to local, daily weather forecasts so they can prepare for various precipitation types and temperature swings.” NOAA will issue its’ spring outlook in March. To read the entire report, go to:

<http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2003/s2142.htm>

Skywarn Recognition Day 2003 - by Hal Austin



Once again NWS Charleston participated in Skywarn Recognition Day on December 6th from 00Z to 24Z (7 pm Friday to 7 pm Saturday). The annual event is sponsored by the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) and celebrates the relationship between the NWS and the amateur radio community. It was started in 1998 by Scott Mentzer N0QE, the Meteorologist-In-Charge at the NWS office in Goodland, Kansas. During the 24-hour period, hams visit NWS offices and try to make as many contact with other NWS offices as well as non-NWS stations.

The Charleston office, callsign WX4CHS, made 95 contacts. They can be broken down as follows: 28 contacts on 20 meters, 26 contacts on 40 meters and 41 on 2 meters (17 on FM and 24 on APRS). Twenty NWS stations were worked. Local hams that participated were Bob Baldwin KE4KUR, Ed Walker KQ4DC, Doug Clark KU4OC, John Welton N4SJW, Riley Stone K4HYY, Charlie Hall KF4AOT and NWS Charleston forecaster Hal Austin NC4HA.

Retirements at NWS Charleston - by Hal Austin

Steve Rich, Meteorologist-In-Charge of the Charleston NWS office, retired on December 3rd. Steve, a native of Wilmington NC, is ending a nearly 30 year career serving the public through government service.

Steve joined the NWS in March 1974. Duty locations in his career include Camp Springs MD (just outside Washington DC), Little Rock AR, Jackson MS and Ft. Worth TX. Steve has been the MIC here since December 1993. Steve’s “second career” will be working in real estate at the Prudential Real Estate Office on Edisto Island where he lives.



Ron Stevens, Hydrometeorological Technician retired January 3rd. Ron, a native of Thomasville GA, will be ending a federal career spanning 37 years. Ron spent six years (1966-72) as a weather observer in the US Air Force. After joining the NWS in 1972, his duty locations included Lakeland FL, Atlanta GA, Waycross GA, Columbus GA, Centerville AL and Tulsa OK. Ron has been in Charleston since October 1998. After retiring, Ron plans to work part-time as a contract weather observer in the Charleston airport control tower.

We wish both Steve and Ron all the best and we will miss them very much!

New Meteorologist-In-Charge for NWS Charleston - by Hal Austin

On December 19th, NWS Eastern Region Director Dean Gulezian announced the selection of Mike Emlaw as the new Meteorologist-In-Charge (MIC) for the NWS Charleston office. Mike's previous position was Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) for the past nine years at the forecast office in Blacksburg, Virginia. Mike holds a Master's Degree in Meteorology from Penn State and a Bachelor's Degree in Meteorology from Parks College in St. Louis, Missouri. He began his NWS career as an intern and then forecaster at the forecast office in Norman, Oklahoma. His opportunities as acting MIC at Blacksburg have enabled him to experience many aspects of being an MIC. Welcome to the Lowcountry Mike!

Tropical Season 2003: A Wrap-Up - by Bob Bright



As expected by both NOAA and Dr. William Gray of Colorado State University, the 2003 Atlantic hurricane season turned out to be busier than normal. In the Atlantic basin, which includes the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico, 15 tropical storms formed. Seven of these storms became hurricanes with maximum sustained winds of at least 74 mph and 3 became major (Category 3-5) hurricanes on the Saffir-Simpson scale (Fabian, Isabel and Kate) with winds greater than or equal to 111 mph. For comparison, an average year includes 10 tropical storms, 6 hurricanes and 2 major hurricanes.

Although the official Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30, tropical systems can form any time of year. In fact, this season got off to an unusually quick start as Tropical Storm Ana become the first Atlantic tropical storm on record during the month of April. On June 30, Tropical Storm Bill came ashore in southeast Louisiana with winds near 60 mph. Over the following few days, the remnants of Bill brought 8 tornadoes along with flash flooding to the NWS Charleston's county warning area. This event proved to be a good reminder that tropical systems making landfall elsewhere in the U.S. can still pose a serious threat to the South Carolina Lowcountry and southeast Georgia.

Hurricane Claudette, the first hurricane of the season, struck the central Texas coast on July 15 as a Category 1 storm with 90 mph winds. Later that month, Tropical Depression #7 formed off the east coast of Florida and quickly came ashore on the central Georgia coast on July 26 bringing 2 to 3 inches of rain to the area. About the same time, on September 5, Hurricane Fabian lashed Bermuda as a Category 3 storm with winds near 115 mph making it the most destructive storm to hit that island in over 75 years.

The strongest storm of the season was Hurricane Isabel, which reached Category 5 strength (155+ winds) on September 11 northeast of the Leeward Islands. Thereafter, Isabel generally moved toward the northwest and weakened considerably before making landfall on the Outer Banks of North Carolina on September 18 as a Category 2 hurricane with winds near 105 mph. In addition to a 6 to 8 foot storm surge along the North Carolina coast, Isabel produced record water levels all the way up the Chesapeake Bay in Washington DC, Baltimore and Annapolis. In the end, Isabel was blamed for killing 16 people and causing over 2 billion dollars in damage. Excellent track and intensity forecasts from NOAA's National Hurricane Center as many as 3 days before landfall provided coastal residents with considerable time to prepare for the storm.

In late September, Hurricane Juan pounded Nova Scotia as a Category 2 storm with winds near 100 mph. According to the Canadian Hurricane Center, Juan was one of the worst tropical cyclones to hit the Halifax area in decades. Hurricane Kate became the last major hurricane of the season in early October, but the storm remained at sea and never affected any land areas.

The last two tropical cyclones of the season, Tropical Storms Odette and Peter, formed in early December. The last time two storms formed in December was in 1887.

Much more information on the 2003 Atlantic season can be found at the National Hurricane Center website: **www.nhc.noaa.gov**.

The Southeast Regional Climate Center - by Hal Austin

Just up the road in Columbia SC is the Southeast Regional Climate Center (SERCC). It was founded in March 1989, and is one of six regional climate centers around the nation. The SERCC serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The mission of their dedicated staff of climatologists is to provide timely, high quality and pertinent climate data and information to public and private users in the region. The SERCC maintains a full service climate data access facility which is staffed daily from 8 am to 5 pm. Their extensive database includes weather observations from over 1,000 cooperative daily stations, over 200 NWS hourly stations, and several dozen automated hourly stations from state mesonetworks. The SERCC serves a wide variety of clients in both public and private sectors. They invite you to stop by their extensive, information-packed website at **www.sercc.net**. They can be reached by phone toll-free at 1-866-845-1553, or fax at (803) 734-9573. Please contact them today for any past weather data or climate information you might need!

What's Going On? - by Hal Austin

What's the chance of rain today? Can I take my boat out this weekend? Are there any spotter training classes coming up? What was the high temperature last Wednesday? Any storms on the radar? Answers to questions like these can be found on NWS Charleston's website at

<http://wchs.csc.noaa.gov>. Our site is your #1 source for any and all things weather-related in south coastal South Carolina and southeast Georgia. Forecasts, live Doppler radar displays (which can be animated), local climate data and so much more is available 24/7! Bookmark us and stop by often to keep up with “what’s going on.”

***All of us at the National Weather Service Forecast
Office in Charleston wish you a very Happy New Year!***